Socialist Voice

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RWL launches election drive for jobs, defense of Quebec

By the Editors

The Revolutionary Workers League/Ligue Ouvriere Revolutionnaire (RWL) announced April 12 that it will present a slate of candidates in the federal elections in major cities across the country.

There will be RWL candidates in both Quebec and English Canada.

Against Ottawa's "national unity" campaign, the RWL will defend the right of the Quebecois to decide their own future, free of outside pressure and threats. Against growing economic crises, unemployment, and attacks on labor, the RWL will advance a program of action that can unite working people in defense of their interests.

Socialist Voice urges its readers to support the Revolutionary Workers League campaign.

Trudeau says that the chief election issue is Quebec. For him this means using the elections to block Quebec's legitimate national demands. He asks everyone, English Canadians as well as Quebecois, to vote on the issue. In itself that is a denial of Quebec's right to choose its own future—all the more so when all three major federal parties stand for Canadian unity.

Even inside Quebec, all major parties will campaign against independence. And then, after the Liberals sweep most of the seats in Quebec, Trudeau will turn around and claim that he has a mandate that overrides any Quebec referendum.

The RWL will speak out against this fraud, and campaign for Quebec's right to self-determination. It will show how actions like the pullout of Sun Life and Trudeau's threats to use force against the Quebec nationalist movement go together with the Liberal-Tory election campaign: they are all part of a concerted effort to keep the Quebecois oppressed and exploited. The RWL will explain to English-Canadian workers how they have a vital stakte in opposing Quebec's oppression. In English Canada, RWL members are active in efforts to win support for the right of self-determination in the trade unions, the NDP, and other social movements. This campaign offers a chance to win new support for Quebec self-determination.

The RWL stands for Quebec independence—the option of virtually all Quebecois who actively oppose their national oppression. The struggle for an independent and socialist Quebec, for a workers republic of Quebec, will be the chief feature of the RWL's campaign inside Quebec itself.

Trixie Stevens/Socialist Voice

Need for more actions like B.C. labor's March 30 demonstration for jobs, above, will be important theme in Revolutionary Workers' election campaign.

The revolutionary socialist campaign will also center on unemployment. For the ruling class high jobless levels have replaced wage controls as their chief means of keeping down wages and undermining established union rights. Labor urgently needs to ally with the unemployed and youth in a militant mass struggle for jobs. Spread the available work around—30 hours work without loss in take-home pay. For early retirement at full wages, indexed to the cost of living. For massive expansion of quality public housing, childcare, and educational facilities, to create jobs.

We'll report on the full range of the Revolutionary Workers League program in coming issues of *Socialist Voice*.

Revolutionary socialists fight for independent labor political action—for a break with the capitalist parties and their policies, for political action in the interests of the working class and its allies.

Accordingly, in Quebec, the RWL struggles to get the unions to stop supporting the Parti Quebecois, an antilabor party, and to establish a mass labor party based on the union movement. The RWL urges the unions to move toward a labor party by running their own candidates in these elections.

There is a different situation in English Canada, where the workers can vote against the capitalist parties by voting for the New Democratic Party. Because the NDP is the mass party of the English-Canadian labor movement, the RWL urges the highest possible vote for the NDP in English Canada. The RWL stands for the election of all NDP candidates running in ridings in English Canada where the RWL has no candidate.

But while it is organizationally independent of the big-business parties, the NDP offers a program which does not differ fundamentally from that of the Liberals or Tories. It does not defend Quebec's right to self-determination. Broadbent, like Trudeau, is speaking out for "national unity." On unemployment, the NDP offers a patchwork of half-measures, which by its own admission would still leave most of the unemployed without jobs.

In short, the NDP has no real answers.

But such answers do exist. The RWL campaign will show how the working masses in both Quebec and English Canada can defend their interests, and how the deep crisis of the capitalist system can be overcome. It will explain the need for a workers government and a socialist society.

We urge you to support the RWL campaign in every way you can.

Special report from CLC convention

Postal workers lead fight for new course

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Frank Rooney/Socialist Voice

Dennis McDermott and Joe Morris of CLC executive.

Frank Rooney/Socialist Voice

Jean-Claude Parrot and Marcel Perreault of CUPW.

Labor and socialist unity theme of May Day rallies

By Judy Rebick

The Manitoba Federation of Labor (MFL) is organizing a united demonstration on May Day against the cutbacks drive of the Conservative government.

It's a sign of the times. The working class in English Canada is beginning to celebrate the traditional international working-class holidays.

We saw the same trend this year on March 8, International Women's Day, when 8,000 people demonstrated in English Canada.

In other English-Canadian cities, May Day celebrations remain largely the domain of small socialist groups—but this year's rallies will be more united than before.

In Quebec the labor movement has celebrated May Day for years with massive united demonstrations accompanied by a significant number of one-day strikes.

There will be no united May Day action in Quebec this year. Increasing conflict between the Quebec Federation of Labor (FTQ) on the one hand, and the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CSN) and the Quebec Teachers Federation (CEQ) on the other, have led to the calling of two rival May Day actions.

The revolutionary Marxist biweekly *Lutte Ouvriere* urged workers to press for "a unified, open, and all-inclusive demonstration on May 1, against unemployment and against our national oppression."

In Manitoba the MFL has invited various groups, including the Coalition for Rent Controls, the Manitoba Child Care Association, the Communist Party, and the Revolutionary Workers League, to participate in an evening rally on May 1 at the legislature. Student councils have also been invited. After the rally the demonstrators will march to the Union Center for speeches and entertainment.

In Vancouver a number of socialist and left groups have joined forces for a united May Day action. The Socialist Organizing Committee, Spartacus Books, the Service, Office, and Retail Workers Union of Canada (SORWUC), the Revolutionary Workers League (RWL), the Committee for Defense of Human Rights in Chile, the Chile Solidarity Committee, and other groups are sponsoring a united celebration of May Day.

In Edmonton the Revolutionary Workers League, the Young Socialists (YS), the Chilean left, and Erewhon books collective will join with other groups in an outdoor rally to celebrate May Day.

The Regina RWL is sponsoring a May Day celebration jointly with the Chilean Workers Committee. The rally will also kick off the RWL election campaign in that city.

Where to celebrate May Day in your city:

- **Edmonton**: Sunday, April 30 at 2 p.m.; Riverdale Community Center and Park, with speakers, music, and picnic lunch.
- **Montreal**: Monday, May 1, at 7 p.m.; FTQ demonstration, Parc Laurier; CSN-CEQ demonstration, Parc Molson with Soiree de Solidarite following at Centre Paul Sauve.

—Saturday, May 6, at 7:30 p.m.; Ligue Ouvriere Revolutionnaire May Day celebration at Centre Universitaire, Universite McGill; singers on Quebecois and Chilean struggles, dancing, and refreshments.

- **Regina**: Saturday, April 29, 7:30 p.m.; Union Center; speakers and celebration.
- **Toronto**: Saturday, April 29, 8 p.m.; RWL and YS May Day celebration at 334 Queen Street West; social.
- **Vancouver**: Saturday, April 29, 8 p.m.; Ukrainian Hall, 805 East Pender; speakers and celebration.
- **Winnipeg**: Monday, May 1, evening; rally at legislature, march to Union Center, speeches and entertainment to follow.

—Friday, April 28, 8 p.m.; Socialist Forum on May Day, University of Winnipeg, Lockhart Hall.

—Saturday, May 6, 6 p.m.; 7th annual RWL May Day Banquet, 211 Edmonton Street, with speaker from U.S. on the coal strike.

Don Tapscott/Socialist Voice

Quebec unions marched together on May Day in 1974. This year they are holding rival rallies. But in Manitoba unions are sponsoring a united action.

CLC delegates hail May Day

"WHEREAS the first of May was established 1888 in Chicago, U.S.A., as a working-class holiday, fighting for the eight-hour day and collective bargaining and since then recognized and respected throughout the world as the international working-class holiday; and

"WHEREAS the Congress at its last convention went on record to urge the federal government to recognize May first as a statutory holiday; and

"WHEREAS it is incumbent on the labour movement in the meantime to recognize May first as effectively as possible;

"THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Congress celebrate International Labour Day on May first and encourage affiliates to do likewise by holding appropriate events and activities to commemorate that day in a well publicized manner."

That is the text of the resolution on May Day submitted to the Canadian Labor Congress convention by the Manitoba Federation of Labor.

The CLC leadership amended the resolution before submitting it to the floor. Their version had it that affiliates should merely petition provincial governments to have May Day declared a holiday rather than taking action themselves.

The convention rejected this version, voting to refer the resolution so that the original text could be submitted to a vote. Of course the resolution never came back to the floor.

But it was one of the few victories of militant forces at the convention, and a sign of the support in the unions for May Day actions.

Largest campus protests in the last five years

Demonstrations of 5,000 in Edmonton on March 15, and 7,000 in Toronto on March 16 were the high points of the biggest wave of campus protests in five years.

In every region of Canada the pattern is the same. Provincial governemnts are slashing deeply at educational budgets. Students, staff, and faculty are beginning to fight back.

The demonstration of 3,000 in Winnipeg is reported on the opposite page. Below are some of the other recent university protest actions across the country.

Nova Scotia

Six hundred students participated in a province-wide protest on March 30 called by the Nova Scotia caucus of the Atlantic Federation of Students.

Students in the Maritime provinces face common problems of inadequate university funding. The Council of Maritime Premiers has granted universities only a 6.7 percent increase.

Students in New Brunswick held meetings on the cutbacks in solidarity with the Nova Scotia action.

Newfoundland

Two thousand students demonstrated in St. John's April 13 against the provincial government's cutbacks policy. It was the largest protest action in Newfoundland in several years, and the first major student action since 1972.

The Moore government has imposed a 4.2 percent ceiling on spending increases at Memorial University. Loan ceilings for student aid have been raised, and there is talk of tuition fee increases.

The protest was organized by an independent grouping, the Committee Against Cutbacks in Educational Funding, but was supported by the Memorial U student union.

The student union belongs to the Atlantic Federation of Students, although Newfoundland educational funding is determined separately from the other Atlantic provinces.

Northern Ontario

SAULT STE. MARIE — A demonstration in front of Sault College of Applied Arts and Technology on March 16 united 130 students from Sault College and from Algoma University.

Three hundred also demonstrated that day at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay.

Ray Hachigan and Brian Burch, organizers of the Sault action, judged it a success.

At the rally, Brian Burch told students they should not rely on the Ontario Federation of Students to protect their interests. Individual students must become involved and take action, he said.

Saskatchewan

SASKATOON — Five hundred students and workers rallied on March 16 to confront NDP Premier Allan Blakeney. A week earlier 350 students and library workers had stormed the administration building and confronted the Board of Governors who were meeting to decide the tuition fee increase.

The demonstration was jointly organized by the University of Saskatchewan Students Union; the University Employees Union; the Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 1975; and supported by the City Hall workers, CUPE Local 59.

CUPE Local 1975, the library workers, went on strike on March 8 to demand the implementation of an equal pay program.

In an interview with *Socialist Voice* Joyce McCall, a steward and executive member of the union, explained the importance of their unity with students. "The administration has accepted the cutbacks and are now trying to pass them on to us. They are also cutting back on student services and trying, unsuccessfully, to pit students against workers."

Students are now organizing a province-wide campaign to combat further tuition hikes and educational cutbacks.

Quebec

There has been no centralized response to the Parti Quebecois government's severe attacks on universities and colleges.

A number of local struggles have broken out. The actions on different campuses have included the occupation of cafeterias, and of a Ministry of Education office. A strike in the economics department of the University of Quebec in Montreal mobilized more than 1,500 in student assemblies and mass picket lines.

These actions show the possibility for a coordinated Quebec-wide mobilization. But the National Association of Quebec Students (ANEQ) has not yet made any moves in this direction.

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Faculty, support staff join in

Man. students march against cuts

By Steve Mitianin

WINNIPEG — Students, faculty, and staff across Manitoba have united to take the lead in fighting the Sterling Lyon government's drastic cutbacks.

Three thousand militant and angry protesters marched through Winnipeg streets to the legislature April 6, while several hundred students marched on provincial government buildings in The Pas.

The actions were by far the largest in the recent series of protests against the Lyon government.

Lyon was presented with about 8,000 signed copies of a letter calling on the government to affirm its support for post-secondary education and to revise this year's abysmally low level of funding.

On March 9 the government announced that university funding would rise by only 2.7 percent. The next day the University Grants Commission recommended a tuition fee increase of 20 percent to make up for the shortfall in revenue.

When Lyon told demonstrators that "All sectors receiving public support will have the tighten their belts because the province is not in good fiscal shape," his world were drowned out by repeated cries of "Bullshit, bullshit."

The Conservative government has abolished gift and succession duties, increased highway department expenditures by $40 million, and engaged in tax write-offs and giveaways to the corporate sector.

The rally heard messages of support and solidarity from students, faculty, trade unions, and the opposition parties.

Errol Black of the faculty association at Brandon said the protesters were telling the government they want a freeze or rollback on tuition fees, a sliding scale of university grants, and more summer jobs for students. If the government refused to meet these demands, he said, "It's going to be our objective to get them the hell out of here."

NDP leader and former premier Ed Schreyer called on protesters to work to defeat the Conservatives in the next election. Unfortunately, he failed to say what must be done today: massive, independent mobilization of workers and their allies to fight for their demands.

A high level of unity among students, faculty, and staff built the demonstration.

The rally was endorsed by student councils at the universities of Winnipeg, Manitoba, and Brandon; the University of Manitoba Faculty Union; faculty associations at Winnipeg and Brandon; and the Canadian Association of Industrial, Mechanical, and Allied Workers, which represents several hundred staff at U of M who face massive layoffs. Even the U of M Senate was forced to respond to the steady buildup of momentum by endorsing the rally.

Smaller actions built up to April 6, including March 22 and 27 protests at the University of Winnipeg.

The April 6 protest marks an excellent beginning of actions that can roll back tuition fee increases, stop cutbacks, and win jobs for students and for all. The energy and determination that went into building the protest must not evaporate in the coming weeks and months.

The campaign must be continued and broadened in united action with all of the "extra-parliamentary opposition" to the provincial government.

Socialist Voice

3,000 students, faculty, and support staff demonstrated at Manitoba legislature April 6, demanding jobs for students and a freeze on tuition fees.

Students call for binational action

By Kathy Roczskwskyj

EDMONTON—The Federation of Alberta Students (FAS) is planning a provincial day of action in early October against cutbacks. Simultaneous actions are to be held in Edmonton, Calgary, and Lethbridge.

FAS will also recommend the organization of a binational day of action to the National Union of Students, which meets in May in St. John's, Nfld.

The main priority of FAS in the coming year will be to fight inadequate government funding of postsecondary education through mass actions that can involve the community.

This strategy was adopted at an enthusiastic FAS conference in Lethbridge, April 6-9. Forty delegates attended from 10 universities and colleges across Alberta. Conference decisions took a step forward from FAS's previous ineffectual perspective of mass lobbying.

The shift follows the success of the Edmonton demonstration of 5,000 on March 15. FAS will be working with the local anticutbacks committees that built March 15.

A provincial committee was formed to coordinate activity, composed of the FAS executive plus elected representatives from local anticutbacks committees. Similar committees are to be set up on a city-wide basis.

FAS hopes to initiate a conference on cutbacks as a whole toward the end of the summer. Labor, childcare workers, welfare groups, and other groups will be invited.

FAS also decided to try to initiate a coalition to pressure the government for accessible high-quality childcare.

The decisions of the Lethbridge conference hold the promise that students will play a key role in building the fight against government-imposed austerity in Alberta.

Don Tapscott/Socialist Voice

Part of demonstration of 5,000 on March 15.

Continued mass actions proposed by socialists

By Harold Lavender

The Ontario anticutbacks movement showed real signs of life March 16. Our numbers were considerable—7,000—and unity between students, staff, and faculty was strong.

The momentum of March 16 must be continued. We don't want to relive 1976, when 3,000 students demonstrated in January, and nothing was done to follow it up.

What we need this fall is a province-wide demonstration against all cutbacks in the educational sector, uniting post-secondary students, staff, and faculty with secondary and primary school teachers and students.

A conference at Trent University in Peterborough April 29-30, initiated by the Trent Campaign to Fight the Cutbacks and endorsed by the Ontario Federation of Students (OFS), will discuss future strategy for the anticutbacks movement. The Revolutionary Workers League and Young Socialists will propose that the conference adopt the perspective of building a unified demonstration against cutbacks in the fall.

The Trent conference can also clarify our program on cutbacks, and discuss how to build unity with labor and other groups.

Action is clearly necessary. The Ontario government has succeeded in implementing far-reaching cutbacks over the last five years. Worse is yet to come.

A brief this month by the Council of Ontario Universities maps out the implications of Ontario Treasurer Darcy McKeough's prediction that funding increases will be held to under 6 percent a year for post-secondary education. It would mean either doubling tuition fees in the next three years, the council points out, or laying off 2,000 faculty and 2,000 staff.

But well-argued briefs won't sway the government. "Negotiations have failed," proclaimed OFS publicity for March 16.

The OFS got nowhere with its lobbying strategy against differential fee increases for international students. Nor did it do better in lobbying against the general tuition increase of 1976 and the new student aid plan.

Only the development of mass public opposition to the government's policies can stop the cutbacks.

The cutbacks are not confined to postsecondary education. They are affecting the elementary and secondary school system, health care, childcare, and other social services.

Davis would like to block the development of opposition by pitting one group against another. He would like to portray students as an elite group, with interests separate and opposed to those of workers.

We cannot accept this policy of division. We need a united movement against all cutbacks and layoffs, in alliance with the labor movement.

There are openings for unity. In Toronto about 800 teachers and parents rallied April 13 against the firing of 135 elementary school teachers. They marched to the Board of Education, where the board then voted to defer the decision on the firings.

The same week 1,100 high-school students met at Riverdale Collegiate to decide how to demonstrate against the loss of 12 teachers.

A province-wide, united demonstration should be democratically organized with the participation of local anti-cutbacks committees and activists involved in building the protest.

The Trent conference should take the initiative for such an action. This can make it possible to mobilize a broad coalition of student and labor forces in action this fall—a coalition strong enough to block implementation of the cutbacks.

Feminists organizing in B.C. high schools

By Peggy McMillan

VANCOUVER—Feminism is on the rise in Vancouver high schools. Over 500 students attended a February 24 conference on "Sexism, Schools, and Society" sponsored by the British Columbia Teachers Federation.

It was an important breakthrough. And the conference led to moves to start a city-wide high-school student union, which could demand basic student rights that have been denied up to now. Twenty to thrity high-school students have been meeting regularly since the conference to work towards this goal.

Feminism is leading students to question the nature of the school system, and educational officials have reacted with alarm. Langley and Surrey school district authorities judged that the conference's topic was "inappropriate"—and voted to officially ban students in their district from attending.

Over 100 students were thus prevented from attending.

The students who made it to the conference participated in workshops with topics ranging from rape and racism to students' human rights.

The most popular workshop was on assertiveness training. One student commented, "It was fun to play roles in our workshop, but most of us realized that what we were doing wasn't just acting. It was real life. All the attitudes about women were deeply rooted in our high schools."

Students made many suggestions at the conference, especially to have more women's studies courses in their schools. Only four exist at this time.

our view

Solidarity with embattled postal workers!

Once again the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) has been singled out as a central target for Trudeau's antilabor offensive.

A key part of the federal government's hectic preparation for a probable June election is a bill outlawing any strike by CUPW after Parliament is dissolved.

Legislation was introduced the same day as conciliation talks began between the Treasury Board and CUPW. Noting this fact, CUPW president Jean-Claude Parrot said, "they intend to use the postal workers as a scapegoat in an election campaign and they have no intention of negotiating with us."

And once again CUPW stands alone, without the active solidarity of the labor movement as a whole.

The Canadian Labor Congress leadership squelched the introduction of an emergency resolution against Trudeau's antistrike bill at the recent CLC convention.

Instead, they attacked CUPW on the convention floor. Newly-elected CLC president Dennis McDermott took the lead in "heaping shit" on CUPW.

CUPW did no better on Parliament Hill. The New Democratic Party voted against the antistrike bill, but did not try to stop Trudeau from rushing it through Parliament on an emergency basis. It was left to that great friend of labor, former Tory Prime Minister John Diefenbaker, to stand alone in refusing to give the necessary unanimous consent.

The special bill is "not to prohibit a strike," Trudeau said, "but to ensure that it will not be held in the course of an election because that would disrupt the democratic electoral process."

If they are allowed to get away with banning a strike during an election, what's to stop them banning all strikes of government workers on the same basis. After all, they could argue, the daily functioning of government and its bureaucracy is part of the "democratic process" and any strike could disrupt that.

Yet despite the CLC leadership's promise to defend all public-sector workers from government attack, they are not defending CUPW. Instead McDermott is trying to hand CUPW's head to Trudeau on a silver platter.

Union militants must denounce the scandalous silence of CLC leaders. The union movement must rally to the defense of the postal workers.

New upsurge on the campuses

It's a sure sign of spring. Every March, the chill wind of austerity blows across the university campuses as the provincial governments take another swipe at the quality of education. This year was no exception, as postsecondary students found themselves facing tuition hikes up as high as 27 percent, drastic cutbacks in education budgets, and reductions in student aid.

But this spring the government attacks stirred up something new—a storm of opposition on the campuses. In the past six weeks, over 20,000 students across English Canada have taken to the streets to protest the cutbacks.

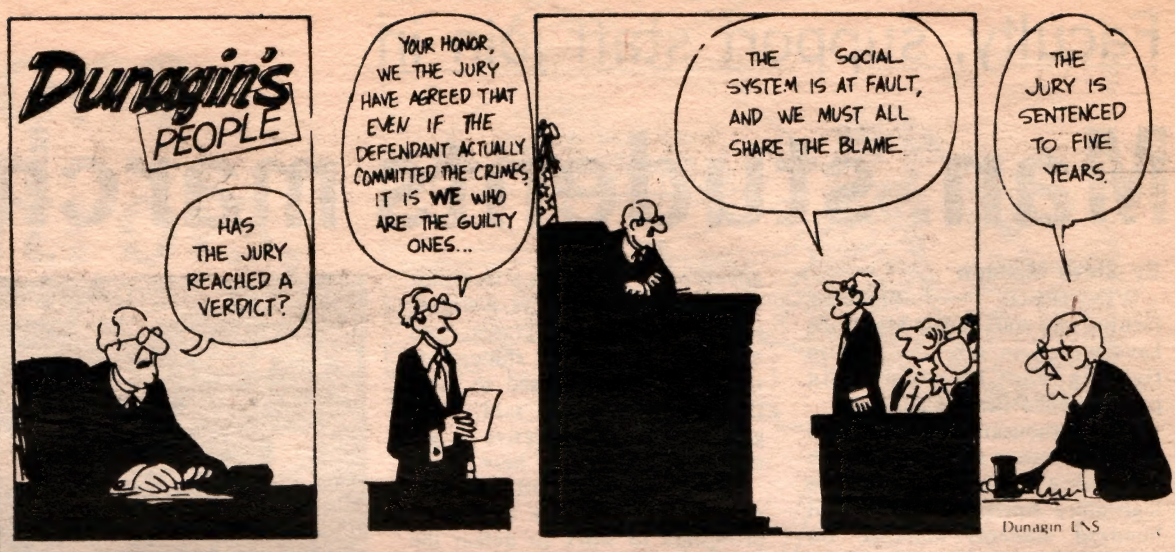
These actions rivaled, in both size and militancy, the largest mobilizations of the student movement in the '60s and early '70s.

There were some important student protests in 1976 and 1977. But this year's actions were qualitatively different. The demonstrations were much larger. They were better prepared. Often there was a whole series of building actions: meetings, rallies, pickets, and occupations. Many more campuses were involved. There were centralized, province-wide protests. And many smaller campuses, whose students could not make it to the province-wide protests, held activities of their own. The mobilizations in English Canada took on a real cross-country character, despite the lack of any real national coordination or leadership.

One of the most important steps forward this spring was a greater unity among students, faculty, and campus workers. There was also some limited success in finding allies beyond the campuses. There was some participation from high-school students and teachers. Many of the actions won support from the labor movement and the New Democratic Party.

Anticutbacks committees now exist on a large number of campuses across the country. In some cities these groups include representatives of faculty and campus workers as well as students. In many areas, it was these groups that initiated the protests, winning the backing of the student unions and the provincial student federations.

Students have shown their willingness to struggle, and an increased understanding of the need to join ranks with labor. Their spring offensive gives a new impetus to the anticutbacks fight, and an encouraging example to labor of vigorous resistance to capitalist attacks.


Dunagin's PEOPLE
HAS THE JURY REACHED A VERDICT?
YOUR HONOR, WE THE JURY HAVE AGREED THAT EVEN IF THE DEFENDANT ACTUALLY COMMITTED THE CRIMES, IT IS WE WHO ARE THE GUILTY ONES...
THE SOCIAL SYSTEM IS AT FAULT, AND WE MUST ALL SHARE THE BLAME.
THE JURY IS SENTENCED TO FIVE YEARS.
Dunagin ENS

'Unacceptable inmate reading'?

By Diana Austman
Business manager

In the February 20 issue of *Socialist Voice*, readers were informed that the paper had been banned from the B.C. Penitentiary. The ruling by the regional headquarters of the Penitentiary System called the *Voice* "unacceptable inmate reading."

When we protested the ban, the only reply was a thank you letter from the secretary of Jean-Jacques Blais, solicitor general. A thank you!

We also sent copies of our protest to the prisoner concerned, Ronald Milne, and to prisoners' support groups. In these cases, we got some replies. Here they are. They have been slightly abridged for reasons of space.

Dear Diana,

First of all I wish to thank you and your paper for your involvement. I was not informed by anyone here that they were cancelling my subscription. Which is the usual procedure I might add. I would welcome a legal action against them, and will be speaking to a lawyer very soon about this area.

My susbscription came as the result of a chap whom I was playing chess with by mail. He came to visit me, along with chess board, and we began to play a game via telephone through bullet-proof glass.

Anyway, he was hassled to such a degree that he left the property and I received no further correspondence from him. I assumed he was somewhat fed up with the way he was treated by staff here as the reason for not continuing writing, and also for not bothering to send out *Socialist Voice* to me.

But this was obviously not the case. The *Socialist Voice* was as you know cancelled by someone here in the library, and the visiting privileges of my friend were cancelled also. Smacks of McCarthyism.

Several people here read your letter and may drop you a line soon about the medical situation here, which is unbelievable. I can furnish you with more detail if you so desire. Let me know what your paper's position might be to exposing this institution's medical policy.

In any event, if you wish to make this into a test case, you have my permission. There should be no restriction on reading materials entering this or any other penitentiary.

Thank you again for your concern and I will drop you a line again soon.

—Ronald E. Milne
Prisoner,
B.C. Penitentiary

Dear Diana,

Thank you for your letter of the 17th together with enclosures from the B.C. Penitentiary regarding banning of your publication from their premises, by not allowing Ronnie Milne his subscription.

Sad to say this is only one aspect of the whole hideous scene. You will find their position is unassailable in law, since they operate under the Penitentiary Act, which was passed by Parliament and therefore constitutes law. The fact that it is grossly unfair, unreasonable, undemocratic, and more of the same, does not alter the fact that they are acting with full authority and power, and with the law on their side.

This is only, as I said above, one area which must be exposed and smashed. American prisoners are permitted to read anything that is available to the public, up to and including Black Panther and Marxist and anarchist material. But that ruling does not spill over to this side of the border.

Nor can we penetrate their edict which has succeeded in barring myself from visiting all federal penitentiaries in B.C. (I don't know if it would apply elsewhere as I haven't had the occasion to test them) on the simple premise that I "constitute a threat to security."

I have even taken it to court and the judge was unable to elicit any evidence, not even a letter, which could support it. Nevertheless he threw my case out maintaining that the court did not feel it necessary to interfere "where it was merely asserted that the ruling was unreasonable, arbitrary, and unfair." So I am taking out another case. In the meanwhile another member of our group is being banned (from three so far) because she is not deemed to be "contributing to the rehabilitation of the inmates." And so it goes.

I would strongly recommend you spearhead a movement on the part of as many publishers and book stores as possible to inundate all the prisons with books and papers—have them return in a similar wave—and then publicize the fact.

—Claire Culhane
Prisoner's Rights Group
3965 Pandora St., Burnaby, B.C.

Ronald Milne wants to read *Socialist Voice*, but because he is being held prisoner by the state, he is not free to make that choice. There are 9,413 prisoners in the federal prison system who are not allowed that choice. We can understand now why we haven't had more requests from prisoners to read *Socialist Voice*—they have never seen it and are not allowed to speak to or be visited by persons who might be able to tell them about a newspaper for social change such as the *Voice*.

Socialist Voice does not incite violence. It supports struggles for democratic rights, including those of prisoners.

We sent a copy of our letter of protest to the *Militant*, the weekly newspaper of our cothinkers in the United States; and the reply we received inspires action on our part here in Canada.

Last spring and summer, several U.S. penitentiaries began to refuse prisoners the right to receive the *Militant* on the grounds that it was "detrimental to the security and orderly running of the institution."

Court action by the *Militant* forced the government to agree that it did not have much of a case; and after several months of "reviewing" issues of the paper, prison officials decided that they should have been allowed in after all.

The U.S. government sent a memorandum to all federal prisons, explaining that the *Militant* had to be allowed in unless there were very specific reasons for banning it, and then only one issue at a time.

Can we achieve a similar victory here? A step in the right direction is to give your support to free speech in the prisons by signing the petition below and returning it to the Prisoner's Rights Group.

Petition for prisoners' rights

We, the undersigned, view the denial of visiting and correspondence rights between prisoners and their friends and relatives (*unless* specific violations can be publicly proven) a negation of freedom of speech and freedom of association, contrary to the spirit and intent of the Canadian Bill of Rights.

We consider visiting and correspondence rights to be a vital component in coping with the escalating crisis, as described in the Parliamentary Subcommittee Report on the Penitentiary System in Canada, June 1977.

We therefore petition the Government of Canada to make the office of the Solicitor-General more accountable, and more responsive to the rights of Canadians, and to order a public review of those individuals and/or groups presently restricted from visiting and/or corresponding with any prisoner detained anywhere in Canada.

Name: .....

Occupation: .....

Address: .....

Fill in and return to:
Prisoner's Rights Group (PRG), 3965 Pandora St., Burnaby, B.C.

Fails to defend Quebec

CLC waffles on self-determination

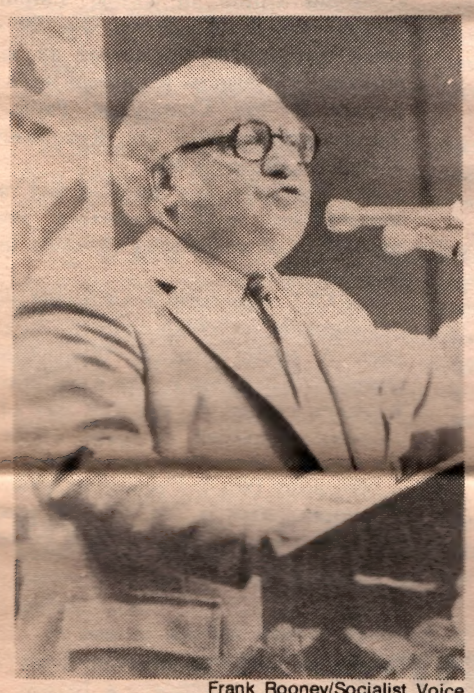
By Judy Rebick

QUEBEC CITY—An eleventh-hour appeal from Quebec Federation of Labor president Louis Laberge was an important factor in convincing delegates to the Canadian Labor Congress convention that a proposed "Statement on National Solidarity" reflected convention sentiment in favor of Quebec's right to self-determination.

"I have to live in Quebec," Laberge exclaimed. "Do you think I would support this resolution if it shied away from self-determination?"

Other delegates pointed out that the statement did just that, stopping short of a clear defense of Quebec's national rights.

"The Robarts commission could have come up with this resolution," Marcel Perreault, president of the Montreal local of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, told delegates. "The Quebecois have the right to self-determination, a right which was endorsed by a number of unions, so why is there nothing in the resolution



Frank Rooney/Socialist Voice

FTQ president Louis Laberge

about it? This position is closer to that of the government of Canada."

The discussion was a confused one, as both supporters and opponents of the resolution pointed to the need for English-Canadian labor to defend the right of the Quebecois to decide their future.

In a demagogic statement made in English, Laberge ensured that the CLC leadership's position would be adopted.

"That we decide for ourselves is clear in the document," he said. "We as working people are determined to stay together no matter what the results of negotiations are."

But Perreault called the resolution "two-headed," pointing out that it refers to self-determination to attract votes from Quebec delegates while talking about "national solidarity" and future negotiations so as not to scare the English.

"If you are so in favor of solidarity, why do you have two Canadian flags on the platform and no Quebec flag when you are here in Quebec," he demanded.

(The flags were stolen from the platform the next day, but they were quickly replaced.)

Many English-Canadian delegates backed Perreault's appeal to refer the motion. Kathy Beaman of Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 1230 said "it gives self-determination with one hand and takes it away with the other. . . . Canadian workers must state unequivocally that we stand with our brothers and sisters against whoever attempts to deny them that right."

Resolution fosters confusion

Such contributions were warmly applauded. But the resolution itself fostered delegate confusion. It stated: "We, the workers of Quebec, . . . assert the right to determine our political and constitutional future." But it added: "We, the workers in other parts of Canada, . . . express the hope that a continuing dialogue will lead to the restructuring of the relationship between us . . . in a vibrant and new Canadian society."

As the *Globe and Mail* eloquently described it: "CLC goes both ways in unity debate."

Delegates were further confused by speakers in favor of self-determination calling for support to the resolution. Speaking for the resolution, CUPE vice-president Kealy Cummings claimed "the congress is clearly saying that Quebecois brothers and sisters have the right to self-determination."

The Communist Party (CP) and In Struggle, a Maoist group, added to the confusion. Some CP supporters spoke in favor of the resolution, some against. An In Struggle supporter spoke on a "pro" microphone during the debate and abstained on the vote. Both organizations chose to emphasize their own positions in support of Canadian unity, rather than fight for a clear stand for self-determination.

Under the heading "CLC urges rights for French Canada," the April 10 issue of the *Canadian Tribune*, which reflects the CP viewpoint, asserts the convention passed a motion in favor of self-determination. The most important criticism advanced by the CP was that the resolution does not call for a "made-in-Canada" constitution.

At one of the most critical moments in the fight to win Einglish-Canadian labor to support self-determination, both the CP and In Struggle failed to defend Quebec's rights.

Why not self-determination?

If the resolution did support self-determination, why didn't it say so? At last fall's Ontario Federation of Labor convention, labor leaders such as CLC secretary-treasurer Donald Montgomery argued against self-determination. But not a single person spoke against it during the discussion at the CLC gathering.

As Perreault pointed out, many unions have already spoken out explicitly in support of self-determination. Why not the CLC?

The answer was found off the convention floor. In a Quebec caucus preceeding the convention discussion Laberge told delegates the resolution was the best he could get. "It was negotiated from the first word of the first paragraph to the last word of the last paragraph, including every comma and period."

The caucus split down the middle, with angry delegates calling the statement a rotten compromise that did not defend Quebec. Laberge responded on the convention floor: "We cannot be divided on this issue because this is what the government wants."

Outgoing CLC president Joe Morris said the same thing to a preconvention press conference, but added a different twist: "If we take a firm and unequivocal position we are in effect destroying the solidarity of workers."

But convention delegates were not divided. The majority sentiment seemed to be in support of self-determination. It was CLC leaders who were divided. And they found a compromise.

"Compromises" such as this one, negotiated on the backs of the Quebecois, are at the root of Confederation itself.

As St. Catharines and District Labor Council president Gord Lambert put it: "The Quebec people have said 'no more.' They should have the right to self-determination . . . and the full support of the convention."

Instead, the Quebecois got a few crumbs to keep them in the CLC.

Montreal demonstration in solidarity with 1971 'La Presse' strike.

Broadbent breaks through confusion

CLC leaders' unwillingness to make a clear statement on self-determination was further explained later on in the week. Speaking to the convention, NDP leader Ed Broadbent echoed the resolution: "Quebec has the right to freely decide in their referendum what their future will be." This apparent statement in favor of self-determination was loudly applauded.

But later, under questioning from journalists, Broadbent clarified his views. "You will notice," he said, "that I didn't use the phrase self-determination. I know that it's a term that has many different meanings."

Broadbent stated that the right of the Quebecois to decide their future without force was fundamental. But, he said, "one of the meanings" of self-determination "that we don't accept" was that the Quebecois should have the right "unilaterally to decide the conditions of independence." If federalism is defeated in the Quebec referendum, he added, he would not support conducting negotiations between Quebec and the federal government "on a fifty-fifty basis."

At a press conference following his election as CLC president, Dennis McDermott stated the CLC agreed with the NDP position.

The ambiguity of the "Statement on National Solidarity" thus leaves the CLC leadership free to throw all its weight behind Broadbent's position — and behind the federal government's "national unity" drive to intimidate the Quebecois.

A small consolation is that this ambiguity might also provide an opening for unionists who strongly support Quebec's right to self-determination to organize to defend this right. A central task will be to ensure that in upcoming conventions and actions of the labor movement, there will be no ambiguity.

As CUPE 1486 delegate Maryanne Reavie told the convention, "We must be prepared to *actively defend* their right to self-determination."

CLC Quebec statement

Following are excerpts from the "Statement on National Solidarity" adopted by the Canadian Labor Congress convention on April 4, 1978.

"We, the working people of Canada, share an economic, political, and constitutional system which, to-day, is creaking under the strain of near chaos.

"Economic, political and constitutional issues are, in some respects, inseparable. Yet, we will not be deluded by attempts of governments to mask or obscure the seriousness of the economic problems with legalistic constitutional debate.

"Constitutional change alone will not solve our problems. Reactionary legislation supported by weak and indecisive political leadership throughout the land has created a national nightmare.

"Political leaders in all parts of this country must understand that the economic crisis ranks as our primary concern. We shall not permit ourselves to be divided in our pursuit of the resolution of that problem.

"We, as working people, are committed to maintaining the solidarity of our labour movement and to respecting the historical reality that our roots are founded in two nations. It is in this context that we address ourselves to the question of the political and constitutional relationship within Canada.

"We, the workers of Quebec, who are members of the Canadian Labour Congress, assert the right to determine our political and constitutional future. This is fundamental; an essential prerequisite to establish the balance for future negotiations. It is an important right, and we have a full appreciation of the importance inherent in our responsibility if we choose to exercise that right.

"We, the workers in other parts of Canada, who are members of the Canadian Labour Congress, respect the fundamental right of Quebec workers to exercise that responsibility. In so doing, we express the hope that a continuing dialogue will lead to the restructuring of the relationship between us which will serve the interests of our two communities of people in a vibrant and new Canadian society."

Canadian Labor Congress convention

Union left fights for action pr

By Judy Rebick

QUEBEC CITY—It was David and Goliath all over again.

On one side was the Canadian Labor Congress leadership with hundreds of pages of well-bound documents, a heavy-handed chairperson, and a massive array of strength on the platform.

On the other was the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) with a 14-page document entitled "A Program of Action" and several hundred supporters on the floor of the convention.

It was the most important political debate in the Canadian labor movement in decades. But this time it looked like Goliath had won—at least the first round.

CUPW proposed independent mass action against the government in the spirit of the October 14, 1976 binational strike against wage controls. The CLC leadership proposed consultation and collaboration with the government in the spirit of tripartism and the *Manifesto* passed at the last CLC convention.

"We need to start a counterattack to the government's campaign against us," Jean-Claude Parrot, president of CUPW, told the convention. "We need an action program that offers an alternative to tripartism."

The CLC brass replied not with a clear political debate but with slanders. Unable to defend their attempts to sneak tripartism in the back door through their policy papers, the CLC brass tried to discredit their opposition through red-baiting and abuse.

Belligerently defending a vicious red-baiting article against CUPW in the *Globe and Mail*, newly-elected congress president Dennis McDermott told the postal workers, "you can't stand at the microphone day after day and pour buckets of shit over the platform and not expect some retaliation."

Frank Rooney/Socialist Voice

Dennis McDermott and Joe Morris sizing up the opposition.

Tripartism in disguise

The CLC leadership's policy papers were designed to confuse. They contained a fairly good analysis of the problems with the "free enterprise" system and some good demands such as a shorter workweek and organizing the unorganized. But not one word about how to achieve these demands.

The documents call for the CLC to be strengthened organizationally to give it more weight to lobby the government. The proposals for an industrial strategy, corporate disclosure, manpower policies, and other questions are all for changes in legislation rather than demands for union negotiations or mobilizations of labor.

Without mentioning the word "tripartism" the elaborate documents are proposing various forms of class-collaboration like tripartism. This was indicated by the obstinate refusal to include any criticism of tripartism in the proposals to the convention. But it was made crystal clear by the supporters of the policy papers.

A member of the United Auto Workers defending the documents saw them as "the most important thing before the labor movement in decades. . . . Without tripartism," he pointed out, "the policy papers will crumble into dust."

A member of the plumbers union explained that "through tripartism we can participate in the kind of struggle we need."

In opposition to the various policy papers put forward by the leadership, delegate after delegate pointed to their *real* character. Louis Lang of CUPW summed it up. "Two years ago, we were told the *Manifesto* was an 'historic occasion' but I haven't heard from anyone now on what happened to that document. Members of the Executive Council should be held responsible for those two years. Where is their report of what happened to the Anti-Inflation Board? . . . This Congress should take a specific position on tripartism—it should be abandoned."

But it was not. The policy papers were passed with a few hundred votes in opposition. CUPW was not allowed to submit its "Program of Action" to a vote.

CUPW defends the majority view

The debate at the CLC convention was not new. It has occurred at every provincial labor federation convention in the country in the last few months. Every one of those federations voted overwhelmingly to reject tripartism.

Yet the leaders of the British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and Ontario federations of labor, and of the Canadian Union of Public Employees were all silent despite the massive opposition of their organizations' conventions to tripartism.

CUPW was arguing a position that had been adopted by a majority of the labor movement's previous conventions. Yet for this they were branded as troublemakers and communists.

Several hundred delegates voted with CUPW, especially those from the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) and from Quebec. But the only other forces who argued for an action program and against tripartism were supporters of the Communist Party, the Maoist groups, and the Revolutionary Workers League (RWL).

The *Vancouver Sun* reported that "some sources close to the leadership" saw "a resurgence of communist elements in the labor movement."

The CLC leadership was worried less by the numbers of leftists than by their impact. A leaflet entitled "Tripartism in disguise" distributed by the Revolutionary Workers League on the first day of the convention warned delegates about the real line of the policy documents.

"It's clear that the power to which the document refers is not workers power," the leaflet explained. ". . . it is power to

UAW says no to Fleck violence

By Beverly Bernardo

All but a handful of the 1,700 members of the United Auto Workers (UAW) at the Ford Motor Company plant in Talbotville, Ontario refused to report to work April 12 in a show of support to striking workers at the Fleck Manufacturing plant in Centralia.

That same day, 500 people joined Canadian Labor Congress president-elect Dennis McDermott on the Fleck picket line to protest violence against the strikers—all but five of whom are women—by the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP).

McDermott had announced his plans to go to the picket line at a press conference during the CLC covention in Quebec City. An announcement of the conference said there was "a trail of gunpowder leading from Fleck to the office of Bill Davis," and McDermott planned to ignite it.

Labor support for the Fleck strikers has been growing since the workers went out March 6. Responding to OPP attacks on strikers, auto workers from Kitchener and Talbotville have regularly joined the picket line since March 14. The UAW has also warned Ford Motor that it will shut down the company's Oakville plant if it continues to accept supplies from Fleck. And, at the CLC convention hundreds of buttons supporting the Fleck strikers were sold.

The Fleck workers are striking for a first contract; UAW Local 1620 was only certified at the plant last October. Wages at Fleck are low—ranging from $2.85 to $3.20 an hour. The union is fighting for a $3.20-an-hour minimum wage and an across-the-board increase of 75 cents an hour. The company's offer was 10 cents an hour in each year of a three-year contract.

And working conditions are also terrible. There are usually only three toilets for the 130 workers. People are repeatedly burned on spitting molds and wire racks fall on their heads. The dust levels trigger headaches and sinus complaints.

These are not unusual circumstances for small unorganized plants—particularly when the majority of the workers are women. But the involvement of the Ontario police and the fact that Ontario Deputy Minister of Industry and Tourism James Fleck's family owns 50 percent of Fleck made the strike front-page news.

Accusing Fleck of a conflict of interest, McDermott said "there are a number of questions that have to be answered by the government to clear up why Ontario provincial police" became involved in the strike. So far there have been no answers.

Police intimidation started three days before the strike began when in an unprecedented move the OPP went to the plant to lecture workers on the do's and don'ts of picketing. They told the women not to bring baseball bats, knives, and other such weapons to the picket line.

But it has been the OPP that has been responsible for picket-line violence. In addition to their usual role of herding scabs through the picket line, the OPP has shoved women into snow banks. At one point a woman was dragged out of a car with her seat belt still on. The OPP has arrested 22 people during the course of the strike.

The company has also taken a hardline position; it has refused to negotiate on the question of union security.

But far from breaking their determination, the OPP's harassment and the company's refusal to budge have united the Fleck workers more than ever. And the way the UAW has come behind the strike provides an example of the type of trade-union solidarity needed to win strikes.

Weighted voting project meets defeat

QUEBEC CITY—Canadian Labor Congress leaders ran into major difficulty here in implementing their proposals to bureaucratically centralize the congress.

Their main organizational proposal for centralization was defeated.

Expressing the doubts of many delegates in handing more power over to the CLC leadership, David Poholko of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 994 said, "I have not got the impression that I have been participating in a democratic convention. . . . Things appear, disappear, only to reappear again. I'm suspicious of how this leadership views democracy."

The defeated constitutional amendment proposed the taking of a "weighted vote" in CLC conventions at the request of one third of the delegates. Each union's delegation would receive a vote proportional to the union's membership.

The proposal required a two-thirds majority to pass. The vote was 1,399 in favor, 723 against. The motion lost by 23 votes.

Relating the proposal to plans for tripartism, Val Bjarnason of the United Electrical Workers explained that "the CLC wants to say 'we speak as a unified voice.' " But "we don't have that kind of CLC," he said, comparing it to the AFL-CIO in the United States, "and we don't want it, if it is built on constitutional amendments" instead of policies that win the support of the membership.

The CLC leadership tried to convince delegates that the amendment was not all that important. Louis Laberge, president of the Quebec Federation of Labor, said, "We ought not to get excited; this only gives fair representation for unions."

But the CLC leadership was excited. Excited enough to organize a caucus whose sole purpose was to try to convince delegates from CUPE to support the motion. Excited enough to consider raising the question once again after their defeat.

If passed, the amendment would have been the first organizational step toward increasing the bureaucratic centralization of the CLC. Its defeat was a small but important victory for those who see the strength of the CLC in the militant activity of the membership.

ogram

lobby the government more effectively. . . . While there are no explicit proposals for tripartite bodies, the door is left wide open." The leaflet pointed to the need for a clear rejection of tripartism and the adoption of an action program and an unambiguous position in favor of self-determination for Quebec.

Red-baiting instead of strategy

Instead of responding to the political criticisms raised by CUPW and the left delegates, the bureaucracy took the offensive.

In response to a demand to defend tripartism or reject it Art Kube, a CLC staffer, replied, "Revolution is not the order of the day, the ballot box is still the way." Another bureaucrat asked delegates if they thought voting for the Communist Party or other left groups would get them what they wanted.

The brass tried to use the convention's overwhelming support for the New Democratic Party as a stick to beat the left. "Renewed support to the NDP" was their only action proposal. When delegates argued for mass action for labor's demands, the CLC brass argued as if this were somehow counterposed to support for the NDP.

In Struggle, a Maoist group, played into their hands by calling the CLC to break with the NDP without posing a real alternative.

C.S. Jackson of the United Electrical Workers responded to the brass's rhetoric: "We need to mobilize not only on the electoral front." Increasing the NDP vote required such mobilization, he said, because "working people respond on the basis of what is visible not rhetoric."

Against Bill C-28

The one place where the CLC leadership seemed prepared to draw the line was in response to Trudeau's Bill C-28, which effectively imposes wage controls on the public sector.

In one of the few unified moments in the convention, delegates unanimously endorsed a resolution that promised "that the CLC will organize wholehearted support for any demonstrations, meetings or lobbies or other actions necessary to defeat Bill C-28."

Maryanne Reavie of CUPE 1486 expressed the cynicism of many delegates: "If we fight this bill in the same way we fought the AIB, we will be here in the same situation next time."

Her words echoed like a prophecy when you looked at the ranks of a demonstration organized by the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) against Bill C-28. Despite the fact that the convention had just endorsed a fighting policy against the bill, only a few hundred turned out, mostly from PSAC, CUPE, and CUPW.

The newly-elected CLC leadership preferred the warmth of their hotel rooms to the march. Only Louis Laberge turned up and after a friendly send-off, he sauntered off in the opposite direction.

Frank Rooney/Socialist Voice

Maryanne Reavie, CUPE Local 1486

Frank Rooney/Socialist Voice

Jean-Claude Parrot, president of CUPW, at the microphone, with Marcel Perreault, president of the Montreal local of CUPW.

CUPW leads the way

By Judy Rebick

This was the first Canadian Labor Congress convention where an organized opposition debated the leadership on every major question. The first convention where a left political alternative was placed before the delegates.

It showed that the two years since the last CLC convention have had a profound effect on the labor movement.

Reacting to the wage controls, a massive attack on union rights, the CLC organized its first cross-country political strike in 1976. But at the same time it was launching an offensive to replace the controls with tripartism: a class-collaborationist deal with government and bosses for joint management of the capitalist economy.

After October 1976, the CLC leadership stopped mass actions and went cap-in-hand to beg for crumbs from the capitalist table. Instead they were struck by blow after blow: soaring unemployment, layoffs, attacks on union rights, and now wage controls in the public sector.

No wonder that during the fall of '77, one labor convention after another rejected tripartism.

Challenge of Quebec

The election of the Parti Quebecois on November 15, 1976 posed another challenge.

Would labor be divided and weakened by Trudeau's calls for "national unity" against Quebec? Or would labor in English Canada and Quebec unite against the federal government in defense of Quebec's right to self-determination?

The answer came quickly. The main English-Canadian leaders of the CLC jumped on the Canadian-unity bandwagon, as did the New Democratic Party.

The 2,400 delegates at the CLC convention held in Quebec City April 3-7 represented a labor movement weakened through unemployment and wage controls and disarmed politically by the policies of its leadership.

It became clear on the convention's first day that no wing of the CLC leadership was prepared to criticize the CLC's disastrous policies. But there were delegates who offered an alternative.

CUPW fights for 'Program of Action'

Led by the well-organized caucus of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW), these delegates argued that labor failed to defeat wage controls because it failed to mobilize against them after the October 14 strike. It was tripartism, the surrender of trade-union independence, that led labor to defeat. These delegates proposed the rejection of tripartism and the adoption of a "Program of Action" to defeat the offensive of Trudeau and the bosses.

While CUPW's programmatic booklet failed to speak to the key questions, the CUPW caucus at the convention played an exemplary role, focusing the convention debate on the alternative: tripartism versus an action program. They served as the rallying point for opposition forces.

CLC leaders have quarreled publicly on many questions over the past few years tripartism (or at least the use of the term); self-determination for Quebec; varying degrees of economic nationalism. But they managed to unite for the CLC convention on a position that clearly rejected any mass-action strategy.

They proposed to strengthen the obvious weaknesses of the labor movement in Canada not by mobilizing and involving the membership but by bureaucratic centralization of the congress.

As the brass sees it, tripartism didn't work because labor didn't have the strength to make it work. So their central strategic document outlined steps to give the CLC more leverage in its negotiations with the government.

Their policy documents—hundreds of pages long—are strikingly consistent. They provide hundreds of suggestions for the government on how to improve the functioning of the system, but do not provide working people with any perspective on how to fight back against the effects of capitalist crisis.

These proposals complete the turn toward new forms of collaboration with bosses and government begun with *Labour's Manifesto for Canada* presented to the previous convention. On this road the leadership is firmly united. But they face major problems.

McDermott's rocky road

The CLC leadership felt unable to use the word "tripartism" in convention documents, even though they defended it in the discussion. This shows the pressure they feel from union members tired of the cap-in-hand approach that has gotten labor nothing but defeats.

The leadership cannot avoid a debate in the unions on the CLC convention decisions. But we can expect more of the red-baiting against the left and sectarian attacks on CUPW launched by the brass at the CLC convention to divert this discussion.

Union forces in favor of mass-action strategy must organize as well. Their major weakness at the CLC convention was the lack of a broad, unified caucus. This could have been organized on the basis of opposition to tripartism and support for Quebec self-determination—the two key positions argued at the convention by CUPW.

The fight must be carried into union locals, labor councils, national union conventions, and provincial federation conventions. Key questions will be how to struggle against unemployment, how to defeat further attacks on union rights like the proposed public-sector wage controls, and how to defend Quebec self-determination.

It's also crucial for labor to make links with others who are beginning to respond to the capitalist offensive, like the women's and student movements.

For the bureaucracy the CLC convention marked the culmination of a two-year turn toward new forms of class collaboration and toward centralizing the congress.

For union militants, it marks the beginning of a real struggle for a mass-action strategy and for union independence.

Morris dumps on women

QUEBEC CITY—For most of the Canadian Labor Congress convention it seemed like the women's liberation movement had never happened.

Fewer than 10 percent of the delegates were women. Of these only *five* women spoke at the microphones. Of the hundreds of pages of documents, only the two-page report of the Human Rights Committee even mentioned women workers.

"We're not being treated as equals here today," claimed Maryanne Reavie of Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 1486, speaking to the equal pay resolution—one of the few dealing with women presented to the convention.

The inequality of women showed up throughout the convention. In several documents on unemployment, there was not one word on how women are the first fired and the most victimized by unemployment. In an emergency resolution on the government's Bill C-28, which ties public-sector wages to those in the private sector, there was not a whisper that this was above all an attack on women workers. There was no discussion on how cutbacks affect women, let alone on the need for the labor movement to ally with the women's movement on these and other issues such as abortion and violence against women.

"We want action on women's issues, and we want it now," Reavie told CLC leaders on a point of personal privilege to point out the lack of attention given to women's rights.

Delegates responded to her demand with applause and cheers. Joe Morris, convention chairman and CLC president, responded by red-baiting Reavie, a member of the Revolutionary Workers League. "This is just another chance to get some of your propaganda out," Morris claimed, showing his concern for women's rights. He was loudly booed.

This travesty was in marked contrast to events at last November's Ontario Federation of Labor convention. There, Organized Working Women led a fight by women delegates for the adoption of resolutions on women.

The CLC convention made it clear that women in the unions must organize themselves to ensure that the union movement takes up and supports their demands.

—J.R.

Polish workers fight for socialist democracy

By Don Wilson

"One angry housewife in a butcher-shop line could unravel the whole thing." That's how the January 30 issue of *Business Week* summed up the critical situation facing the government in Poland today.

Inflation and shortages of food and other consumer goods are fueling growing discontent and ferment among the population.

While the Communist Party (CP) government of Edward Gierek maneuvers to try to keep the lid on things, it has been unable to come up with any strategy to resolve the growing contradictions in Polish society.

The latest example is the January 9-10 CP congress held in Warsaw, which revealed deepening disagreement within the CP leadership.

A central reason for dissension within the CP is pressure exerted by a growing political opposition. An indication of the scope of this opposition is the production of unauthorized publications, which are estimated to have a combined run of 20,000 copies of each new issue. Readership of this unauthorized press must be greater as copies of the publications, produced on mimeograph machines or photocopiers, are circulated from hand to hand.

Mass pressure on the Gierek regime has resulted in sharp divisions within the CP itself. One section wants a rigidly authoritarian response similar to that of Leonid Brezhnev in the Soviet Union.

Far-reaching criticisms

But a current favoring liberalization has also emerged. A letter released just before the CP congress was signed by veteran CP leaders, including former Polish head of state Edward Ochab. The letter makes relatively sharp criticisms of Poland's present political course. For example, the authors identify the problem as the "undemocratic form of government" and the lack of democracy in the party.

Even though the criticisms and proposals advanced by the letter are kept within bureaucratically respectable limits, they are the most far reaching made by any prominent CP leaders in East Europe since the 1968 Prague Spring.

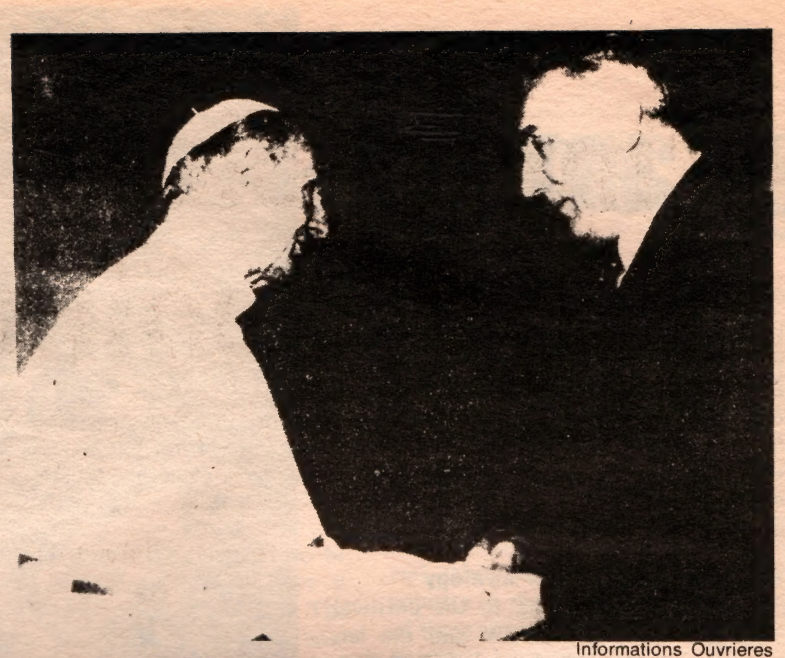
Gierek's regime does not stand alone in its attempts to avoid an explosion. As the December 19 *Business Week* says: "This time a strange 'conglomerate' is trying to save Gierek and the Polish economy." It includes the U.S., which signed credit for $300 million, and West Germany which promised financial aid. In addition, before the CP congress, Gierek met with the Shah of Iran, French President Valery Giscard d'Estaing, Italian Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti, and Brezhnev to solicit economic assistance.

Imperialist support for Gierek

As *Business Week* stated, "Almost everyone has a vested interest in trying to prop up the Gierek regime. . . . West Germany . . . sees a peaceful Warsaw as essential to a tranquil Eastern Europe. U.S. planners have long hoped that there would be a gradual transition to a more moderate Communist regime."

Gierek is also turning to the Catholic church for support. While the church has in the past identified with the democratic opposition movement, it appears willing to use its influence with oppositionists as a bargaining piece in dealing for expanded privileges for itself.

Deals made with imperialist governments, Brezhnev, or the church may buy the Gierek regime some time. But the political and social contradictions in Poland today foretell of social explosions possibly even more profound than those that occurred in 1970-71 and 1976.



Informations Ouvrieres

Polish Premier Gierek with the Pope.

As the events of these years demonstrate, in the Stalinist-ruled countries protests around economic issues like food prices can quickly grow over into political struggles, and can even bring into question the bureaucracy's right to rule.

A brief look at the 1970-71 and 1976 events shows how this can occur.

The 1970-71 workers upsurge

In December 1970, increases in food prices averaging about 30 percent were announced. Immediately strikes began in the Baltic. Three thousand workers in the Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk went on strike. The strike movement spread to the rest of the Baltic, then to other industrialized areas of Poland.

In the Szczecin shipyards, strike committees were formed which effectively ran the shipyard until February 1971. Demands raised by the strikers included withdrawal of the price increases, expansion of democratic freedoms, trade-union independence, and the right to strike. Moves were undertaken to transform the strike committees into permanent workers committees.

The regime offered concessions. Gomulka, the discredited party leader, was shoved aside and replaced by Gierek. But still the workers held out until they were promised a two-year price freeze at 1966 levels.

Even after this important concession the movement did not end. A regional conference of workers' delegates met in Szczecin on February 15, 1971. They agreed on the need to constitute a new trade-union federation that would have real links to the workers.

During the 1970-71 events the student and intellectual opposition did not undertake significant active support of the workers. In the 1968 period these forces had organized important actions in response to poor living conditions and restrictions on democratic rights such as freedom of expression. Isolated from the working class, the students and intellectuals were temporarily defeated by the regime.

By 1976, however, students and intellectuals were again ready to undertake action, this time shoulder to shoulder with the workers.

Between 1971 and 1976, the regime attempted to use a combination of economic concessions and selective repression to defuse the situation.

In June 1976, drastic food price increases were again announced. Immediately workers struck throughout the country. In September, a Committee for Defense of the Workers (KOR) was organized. Hundreds of KOR activists collected money and distributed information in the workers' defense.

Faced with widespread popular support for the victimized workers as well as growing international solidarity with the workers, Gierek was forced to back down. In July 1977, amnesty was granted for workers still in prison on charges relating to the July 1976 strikes.

Opposition consolidates

In the wake of the amnesty, opposition groupings began to form and consolidate themselves. In October 1977, the Democratic Movement announced its formation. This grouping, which publishes a paper called *Glos* (Voice), plans to campaign on a program of positive political change. The Movement for the Defense of Human and Civil Rights has been publishing a monthly newspaper, *Opinia*, since the spring of 1977.

After the apparent political murder of an opposition student, Stanislaw Pyjas, the Student Solidarity Committee was established. In memory of Pyjas some 10,000 students marched through Krakow. Since its formation, the committee has been able to expand to other Polish universities.

KOR, which had played the leading role in defending the workers victimized after July 1976, has transformed itself into a permanent Committee for Social Self-Defense. The new group outlined a three-point democratic program:

"To oppose arbitrary action by the police and any new attempts to suppress opposition by physical force;

"To fight for the right of the workers to defend their interests freely and to organize for that purpose;

"To oppose censorship and all administrative obstacles to free public discussion."

The Committee for Social Self-Defense produces a fortnightly journal, *Robotnik* (Worker), which describes itself as a "paper in which workers will be able to express their own opinions, exchange experiences, and exchange contacts with workers in other factories."

The journal also aims to promote actions "leading to increased participation by the workers in making the decisions about the amount of pay they get, their working conditions, their hours, as well as social conditions and housing." *Robotnik* will also develop the discussion on "what kind of independent workers representatives should replace the unions, which are dead institutions."

The Committee for Social Self-Defense does not present itself as a party prepared to take power. But the existence of the committee and the other oppositional groupings within the Polish CP are both consequences of the mass struggle of the workers and their allies.

The profound difficulties with the Polish economy and the explosive struggles of the working class, students, and intellectuals in recent years give Gierek and his allies good reason for being apprehensive about the future.

Antiwar rally of 45,000 in Tel Aviv April 1 was one of the largest demonstrations in Israeli history.

Thousands in Israel demand 'Peace Now'

By Alan Russet

"Better peace in Israel than a greater Israel," demanded an estimated 45,000 protesters on April 1 in Tel Aviv.

One of the biggest—if not the biggest—demonstrations in Israeli history was composed primarily of military-age youth called upon to shed their blood for Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin's dream of territorial expansion.

The "Peace Now" movement was organized by a group of 300 army reserve officers. They are demanding that "the Israeli government change its priorities and adopt a policy involving compromise to obtain peace and security."

Petitions at the rally addressed to Begin said: "Don't endanger peace for the sake of settlements."

Begin had earlier told the reservists that they were a minority in Israel and should leave the negotiations to him. But the size of the demonstration revealed a deep rift in Israeli society over Begin's openly expansionist policies.

In fact, a poll conducted between March 7 and March 15 found that 60 percent of Israelis opposed Begin's policy of building new settlements in the occupied territories during negotiations with Cairo.

Although the "Peace Now" demonstration was organized by loyal supporters of the Israeli state it represents a deadly danger to Zionism.

Right now demands for peace are being raised in the context of negotiations with Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat. But as time passes more and more Israelis are going to confront the fact that there will be no peace as long as the Palestinian people are denied their rights.

By expelling the Palestinian people from their homeland in order to establish a Jewish state, the Zionist movement guaranteed continuing conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbors. Endless warfare, ever-greater economic sacrifices, and the erosion of democratic rights in a militarized society—that is the price of maintaining the Israeli state.

In the past the Zionist regime pretended that it wanted peace, not Arab territory. Now many of its own supporters see that this was a lie.

And when tens of thousands of Israeli Jews take to the streets and accuse their own government of putting territorial expansion above the hope of peace, it cannot help but have a deep impact on supporters of Israel around the world.

Canadian troops 'keep peace' in Lebanon

"We will be doing something" to meet a United Nations request for additional troops and an extended stay in the UN peacekeeping force in southern Lebanon, External Affairs Minister Don Jamieson announced on April 12.

On the same day, Defense Minister Barney Danson set an October 1 deadline on Canadian participation in Lebanon, overruling an earlier decision that had established a two- to four-week limit.

Eighty-two servicemen will depart for Lebanon April 17. The contingent will be fully operational by April 20.

Their aim can only be to defend against the Palestinian movement the new status quo established after the Israeli invasion.

The trade unions, the NDP, and other forces should demand the immediate withdrawal of the Canadian troops.

Miners block employers' drive: turning point for American labor

By Matilde Zimmermann

The strike of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) in the United States, which lasted from December 6 to March 27, succeeded in blocking the employers' drive to impose a major defeat on the coal miners and cripple their unions.

American capitalists provoked the showdown with the UMWA, expecting easy victory. They encountered massive resistance.

The strike was an important turning point for American labor, greatly strengthening the hand of workers in coming class battles.

The new three-year contract does not meet the miners' original demands, and in all areas except wages its provisions are below those of the previous contract. Forty-three percent of miners voted to reject this contract as they had the previous two.

But the miners did not return to work defeated.

They emerged from the strike proud of the way they had stood up to the operators and the government in rejecting two intolerable contracts. They felt they were still in a position to struggle, despite the contract's provisions.

The contract leaves key questions unresolved. The miners forced the operators to drop cutthroat antistrike provisions of the first two contract proposals, but did not obtain confirmation of their right to strike. When miners are not able to get safety violations and other illegal working conditions corrected, their only recourse will still be "unauthorized" strikes.

The miners won a 39 percent increase in wages and fringe benefits over the life of the three-year contract.

But the new contract dismantles the union-controlled, free health-care plan; and contains an incentive plan that will undermine safety conditions where it is applied. It fails to bring the pensions of older retirees up to current levels.

'A labor relations revolution'

The coal operators made clear what they wanted before the strike began: to secure bonanza profits in an expanding coal industry by whipping the miners into line. Operators' association president Joseph Brennan called it "nothing less than a labor relations revolution. . . ."

But the miners union rejected the first two contracts accepted by its negotiators, contracts designed to roll back the gains of decades of union struggles.

On March 6 Carter invoked the antistrike provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act, ordering the miners back to work.

His move met with total defiance. The coal miners simply refused to acknolwedge that Carter could make their strike an illegal action. Carter was forced to retreat.

How did they do it?

Throughout the strike, U.S. media talked of the uniqueness of the miners, trying to minimize the impact of their strike on other workers.

Militant

Informations Ouvrieres

But there is widespread admiration for the coal miners' militant struggle. And a number of the attitudes and traditions that gave strength to the strike are not at all peculiar to coal miners.

First was the stubborn belief that miners have some basic rights, that were won a long time ago, and that must be defended—such as health benefits, equitable pensions, and the right to leave the mine at once over safety issues.

Other workers are facing similar efforts to take away basic rights won in the past.

A second factor was the miners' sense of their own power. They forced everyone to recognize that coal is not mined by mineowners, governors, the National Guard, labor mediators, or federal judges. It especially is not mined by presidents. Only coal miners mine coal.

"They try to say we're not important," said a West Virginia miner. "Or that we're dumb. But all we did was stop working and they all started screaming 'national emergency.'"

The miners' strike reinforced the idea that the workers have a right to control the conditions under which they labor.

Labor solidarity

The UMWA leadership made no special effort to reach out to find allies for the miners. Yet the support of other working people was an important factor in the miners' struggle.

The working farmers were the first to rally to their defense, organizing to bring donations of food to the coalfields. Later other caravans were organized from major industrial centers. The leaders of the major trade unions ignored the strike as long as they could—but then contributed $4.5 million in the last two weeks of the strike.

The labor solidarity actions that took place were not huge, and the amount of material aid was not decisive. Nonetheless toward the end of the strike the miners' struggle was beginning to become a social cause in wider circles.

Union democracy

The coal miners benefited from recent expereince in fighting to make their union more democratic and more responsive to their needs. They won some important victories through the Miners for Democracy movement in 1972, most importantly the right of the members to vote on the contract.

The fight for union democracy pressed forward during the strike itself. When the terms of the first two contracts became known, miners voiced their reactions at rallies and demonstrations of up to 3,000 throughout the coalfields. Busloads of rank-and-file miners went to Washington and demonstrated outside union headquarters to put pressure on the bargaining council to vote down the "ball and chain" contract.

To exercise even partial rank-and-file control, they had to take on not only the operators but also the national union leadership.

No political voice

The weaknesses of the coal miners' strike did not come from any lack of willingness to struggle. They arose from the fact that the miners' union could not quickly enough develop an alternative national leadership able to mount an effective political campaign to complement the militant strike action.

All the demands around which miners were striking were political issues: the right to decent health care, to a fair pension, to protection against inflation, to safe working conditions; the right to control the conditions under which they work. These issue affect working people all over the country.

But the miners had no voice in the political arena, no elected representatives to place the issues squarely before the public as life-and-death issues for all working people.

The miners were able to stay the hands of the operators, but to go beyond this and make new gains in the contract they would have had to organize on the political front. They would have mobilized to the fullest extent the wide sentiment that existed for labor solidarity actions.

The miners defied the governors of their various states and they defied the president of the United States. But they had no alternative to propose to Democratic and Republican party rule.

What if the UMWA had fielded independent candidates for Congress in the 1978 elections? Such an act would have made a difference in the strike itself.

The coal strike provided fresh proof of the need for a labor party. The miners, together with other workers, could form a party that would challenge the strikebreakers' right to run the federal and state governments just as the miners challenged Carter's right to run their working lives.

—adapted from Intercontinental Press/Inprecor

WORLD OUTLOOK

Thousands protest oil spill

On March 27, 20,000 marched in the biggest protest in Brest, France since May-June '68. The demonstration was organized to protest the worst oil spill disaster in history.

On March 24 the grounded 233,000-ton supertanker *Amoco Cadiz* went aground off the coast of Brittany. By March 25 a black tide covered beaches, harbors, and river estuaries along the northern coast of Brittany for 125 miles.

Looking for a scapegoat for the economic disaster which has wiped out the region's economic mainstays, the French government has attempted to blame the master of the ship.

A wave of angry protests, which began in Brest on March 17, the day of the shipwreck, have placed the blame where it belongs—on the shipowners (Standard Oil of Indiana), the cargo owners (Royal Dutch/Shell), and the French government.

Fishermen, seaweed workers, trade unionists, environmentalists, high-school and university students have joined forces under slogans like "Shipowners—murders," and "The polluters must pay."

The massive demonstration of March 27 was called by 12 organizations including the Communist and Socialist parties, the two largest union federations, and the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire, French section of the Fourth International.

Peruvian exiles win amnesty

Trotskyist peasant leader Hugo Blanco can return to Peru as part of an amnesty announced by the Peruvian military government on March 15.

The decision to allow all persons forcibly exiled from the country to return was a response to the demands of a 48-hour general strike that swept Peru February 27-28, and a series of demonstrations, rallies, and strikes over the past nine months.

Demands for Blanco's right to return have been world wide. Thousands in Canada and the United States signed petitions for Blanco's readmission to Peru during Blanco's recent speaking tour in the two countries.

Italian civil rights attacked

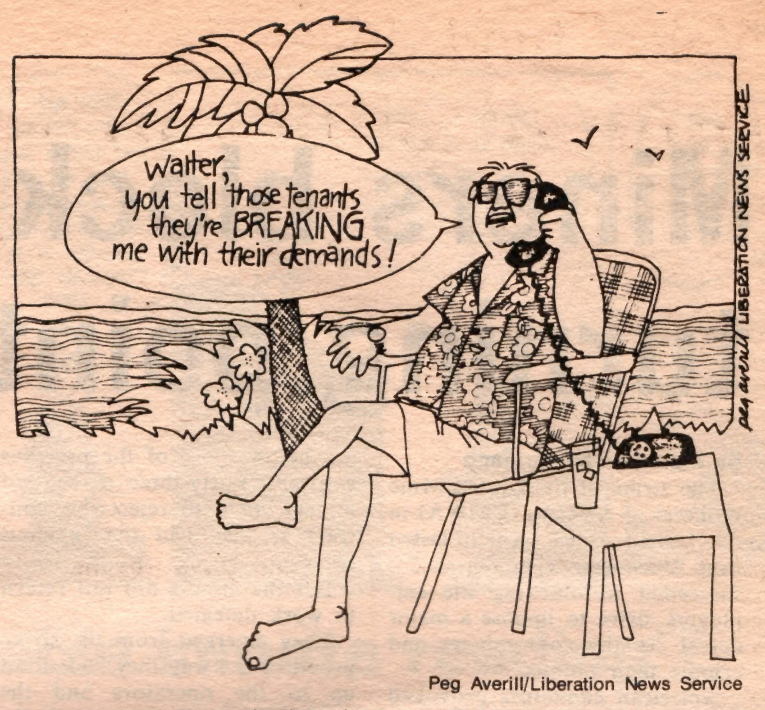
The kidnapping of Aldo Moro, a leading Christian Democratic politician, has led to a sharp attack on civil liberties in Italy.

On March 21, a severe government decree was passed:

- giving police added powers to conduct warrantless wiretapping;
- allowing police to interrogate suspects without a lawyer;
- allowing the detention of people for up to 24 hours for "control";
- requiring landlords to report the names of new tenants or buyers to the government within 48 hours;
- making life imprisonment mandatory in cases where the kidnap victim is killed.

The Gruppi Communisti Rivoluzionaria, Italian section of the Fourth International, has pointed out the disastrous effect of the Red Brigades' terrorist strategy. "The emotional reactions unleashed are being systematically used to facilitate an outright reactionary turn and stepped-up repression."

Winnipeg actions urge rent controls, 'housing for people'



Peg Averill/Liberation News Service

By Jill Finlay and Barry Weisleder

WINNIPEG—Angry tenants have joined the growing movement against the Conservative Manitoba government. Nearly 300 people participated in a public meeting on March 29 and a rally at the Legislature on March 30 to demand that rent controls be retained and strengthened.

"Housing is for people, not profits" was the theme of the actions, organized by the Coalition for Rent Controls (CRC). The CRC, an alliance of over 20 organizations including unions, student, tenant, and community groups, was founded in February, largely on the initiative of the Associated Tenants' Action Committee (ATAC).

The CRC explains that rent controls are a defensive measure for the working class, not a solution to the housing problem. As well as acceding to landlord demands that controls be ended, the Tory government is cutting public housing programs to the bone.

The protest against Sterling Lyon's "de-controls" program has added another voice to the growing outcry against a government bent on making workers and the poor bear the burden of the economic crisis.

Following the introduction of the federal wage controls program, the former New Democratic Party government introduced rent controls designed to hold landlords to an annual 10 percent increase in rents. Although the original program was supposed to last only until wage controls were lifted, the NDP has recently said that limits on rents should stay until the Winnipeg housing vacancy rate is above four percent.

The Tories have promised to "phase out" these controls even though the current vacancy rate is 1.8 percent, and lower in the city center.

The Conservatives talk about seeking an "effective de-controls programme," but according to a former employee of the Rent Review Agency "de-controls are already in effect." Walter Davis, one of 10 staff members recently laid off by the agency, told the rally neither the staff nor the funds exist to enforce the present rent-control legislation.

Other speakers at the March 10 rally included: Jim Burgess, a trade-union activist with ATAC; Brenda Pringle from the Manitoba Child Care Association; and Jack Rodie, president of the Manitoba Division of the Canadian Union of Public Employees.

A highlight of the two days was a presentation at the public meeting by Alderman Joe Zuken of the Labor Election Committee (a municipal electoral front for the Communist Party).

"Instead of strangling the poor at once, they are going to strangle them in phases," Zuken said. Summing up audience feelings, he added, "The battle for rent controls will not be won through dialogue. It will be won by the people of Manitoba standing up and telling the government, 'You take your hands off the rent controls!'"

In addition to NDP and Liberal spokespersons, Conservative George Minaker spoke to the meeting on behalf of Consumer Affairs Minister Ed McGill. He promised the government's measures "will be in the interest of low and fixed income earners." Few believed him.

At the legislature rally McGill offered to speak, but was turned down by CRC organizers. Spokesman Paul Graham, refering to the meeting the night before, said "They [the Tories] had their chance. . . . Tonight is our night."

Support continues to build for the struggle to retain and strengthen rent controls. In addition to union and community organizations, the NDP legislative caucus seems to have come behind the demand, after considerable dithering.

The Manitoba Federation of Labor, which pursued a "wait-and-see" attitude for some time, has endorsed the CRC and invited it to participate in this year's May Day demonstration.

The demonstration, on the evening of May 1, will focus on the fight against the capitalist austerity drive. It promises to be one of the largest of its kind here in many years.

There is growing recognition in Manitoba that unity in mass action is the key to the success of the multifaceted fightback movement. We are witnessing only the beginning. As CRC activist Paul Graham said at the end of the rally: "The plain fact is, we're not going to be able to do anything unless we can grow, unless we can fill up this lawn [in front of the legislature] with 30,000 angry people."

"That," he added, "is not beyond possibility."

Unite against Bryant's crusade

By Andrea Goth

Antigay, antiwoman bigot Anita Bryant is stalking the land once again. Starting on April 26 in Hamilton, Ontario, Bryant will spew her hateful venom in several cities across English Canada.

Bryant has been invited by right-wing religious and fundamentalist groups, including Renaissance International, who sponsored her tour last January. They find her a useful "moral" leader to whip up support for their campaign against the rights of lesbians, gay men, and women.

These right-wing forces clamor for defense of the family and "traditional" morals, aiming to blame the oppressed for the ills of society. They are attempting to isolate and smash lesbians and gays and their public, militant movement which has made significant progress in this country.

Bryant's mid-January visit to Toronto sparked English Canada's largest and most militant actions to date for lesbian and gay rights. The unity built between feminists, lesbians, and gay men at that time must be rekindled. We cannot allow the ruling class and right wing to divide and weaken us with their chauvinism.

More than ever the support of the labor movement is needed to defend the fundamental rights of lesbians and gays now under heavy fire.

Gays, lesbians, and women activists have begun to organize against Bryant's return. In Hamilton, the McMaster Homophile Association is planning to protest her visit April 26.

On April 28, she will be "greeted" by demonstrators when she arrives to speak at the Peterborough Memorial Center. Organized by the Trent Homophile Association, the protest is being actively supported by the Toronto anti-Bryant coalition, which will be busing people to Peterborough for the demonstration.

Although Bryant will not be in Toronto gay activists there are organizing a rally and march for gay, lesbian, and women's rights on April 29. The protest will focus on defense of the *Body Politic* and demand the inclusion of sexual orientation in the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Bryant will be crusading in Edmonton on April 29 at the Coliseum. The Coalition to Answer Anita Bryant is holding a march through downtown and a delegation will greet her at the airport. Activists from Calgary will also be participating.

And then it will be on to Winnipeg, where she is scheduled to speak with Dale Evans at the Convention Center on April 30. The anti-Bryant coalition in Winnipeg is organizing a picket line against her hate campaign.

'Born again' bigot Bryant finds salvation in Toronto during January antigay tour.

Ont. students receptive but Levesque says little

By Harold Lavender

TORONTO—Ottawa's anti-Quebec "national unity" campaign hit a bit of a slump at York University April 7. More than 1,400 people turned out to hear another side of the story from Quebec Premier Rene Levesque.

Campuses have been as important a marketplace as any for Trudeau's anti-Quebec sales pitches, and York has stood out by hosting half a dozen "conferences" on Confederation's crisis over the past eight months (Encounter Canada, Unity Canada, Destiny Canada, etc.) None of these attracted half the number who came to hear Levesque on his first trip to English Canada since the November, 1976 victory of his Parti Quebecois.

Students packed Burton Auditorium's 650 seats 45 minutes before the scheduled starting time. Locked doors and police uniforms greeted another 700 to 800, including busloads of high-school students, who showed up at the meeting despite minimal publicity.

The campaign of hatred and slander against Levesque and the Quebec independence movement, which has been carried for months by Canada's rulers and their media friends, had almost no reflection in the audience inside or in the crowd outside.

Levesque arrived an hour late to more than a few cheers from about 200 who had waited in a cold wind just to see him. Those who did not cheer showed interest in rather than hostility toward the man.

As he passed through the inner lobby a much more enthusiastic cheer rose from about 60 students who had filled the outer lobby and angrily pounded on the glass doors to the inner lobby for over an hour shouting, "Open the door! Ouvrez la porte!" A few francophone students, in the front of this press, had laboriously worked the pins out of the door hinges. As Levesque appeared the door was pulled from its frame and passed back through the crowd. Three students were detained but not charged as Metro cops plugged the doorway.

Quebec Demain

Rene Levesque

Inside Levesque was greeted by a prolonged ovation from the large majority of what even the *Globe and Mail* was forced to report was a "friendly audience."

Levesque's speech was entertaining and low key. It reflected the PQ's drift toward campaigning for negotiations for a new Canadian union, the PQ's drift away from the goal of independence. In fact he did not mention independence. He did not explain what he meant by "sovereignty," or how it would end Quebec's national oppression. He talked a lot about "association."

Canadians were chastized for their lack of imagination for failing to come up with a new formula that would recognize the reality of two peoples and two nations.

His proposal for a new, more amiable relationship between Quebec and Canada remained vague—the possibility of a common market, a monetary union, free passage of goods, joint ventures, and so on.

Levesque made no effort to enlist the support of the audience to actively support Quebec's right to self-determination although this right is being seriously threatened. Trudeau's threat to "use the sword" against Quebec, Sun Life's pull-out, the illegal activities of the RCMP, the quashing of the Keable commission, and the federal government's proposed new referendum legislation were all ignored.

Levesque the star stole the show. At the end there was only very limited time for questions, which he fielded adroitly. He agreed that Quebec language legislation was unpalatable, but pointed out that francophones in the rest of Canada have only a quarter or half the rights of anglophones in Quebec. He also noted that the PQ's language legislation was based on a deep sense of community feeling. He cited a recent survey that indicated that Bill 101, the language law, was the most popular piece of PQ legislation.

All in all, Levesque was well received at York University. He left the meeting to attend a reception at a Toronto club with a who's who of powerful business leaders. It's doubtful they were as sympathetic to his vision of "better understanding" between Quebec and Canada.

'Voice' fund drive

Appeal short of target

By Art Young

We can now report the results of the appeal we made to readers to contribute part or all of their $100 tax rebate to *Socialist Voice*. We raised only half of our goal of $16,000.

Was the goal too ambitious? No. The *Voice* has a lot of committed supporters—they send us a stream of subscriptions for themselves and their workmates, often along with encouraging letters and suggestions to improve the paper. When we explained why we needed the $16,000 to keep going, we knew that these readers would respond.

One of the problems was that we did not announce the drive early enough or explain it fully enough in the columns of *Socialist Voice*.

Nonetheless the results from Winnipeg show what was possible.

Supporters there far surpassed those in other areas. Why? They aren't the largest group of supporters by any means. Nor are they financially better off than supporters elsewhere.

They succeeded simply because they took the appeal seriously. They started early, worked hard at it, and above all, made sure that they asked every possible supporter for a contribution.

In Winnipeg, 35 people contributed to the *Voice*.

Other areas didn't do things in the same way, and that's why we didn't make our cross-country goal.

Unemployment was also a problem for us. Quite a few people would have contributed, but they had no job, and so got no tax rebate.

One generous person matched every dollar contributed by others with a dollar of her own. As you can see, she donated just over $4,000.

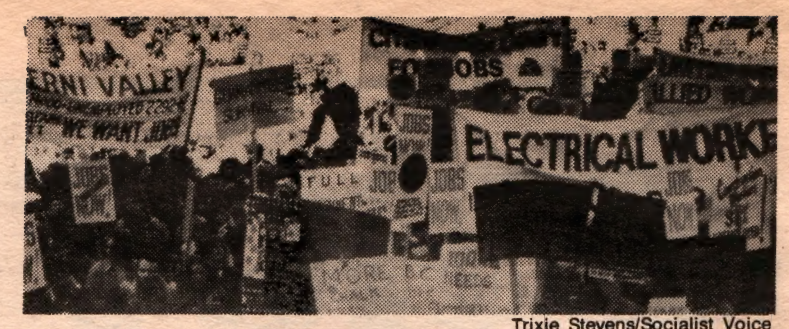
We said in January that we needed the money to put a solid financial base under the newspaper. But now it's clear we have to cut back.

Within an issue or two, we will have a concrete plan to make ends meet, and we'll report it to you then.

In the meantime though, a strong thank-you to all those who contributed, whether in large amounts or small. Despite the outcome of this appeal we know that support for the *Voice* is strong. This is the best guarantee of the paper's future.

Fund Drive Results

Vancouver	**$900**
Edmonton	**440**
Saskatoon	**100**
Regina	**475**
Winnipeg	**1,223**
Hamilton	**180**
Toronto	**711**
Individual contributions	**$4,129**
Matching contribution	**$4,129**
Total contributed	**$8,258**



Trixie Stevens/Socialist Voice

B.C. union support was key to success of March 30 rally for jobs.

Hamilton jobless organizing begins

By Jim Slater

HAMILTON—While passing out leaflets for the Hamilton Committee of the Unemployed in front of the Canada Manpower office here, I met a recent high-school graduate who was attending a Manpower training course on "how to get a job." He was hopeful that the course would help him get a job, but he also decided to come to the next meeting of the Committee of the Unemployed.

His response shows the growing potential for organizing against rising unemployment. International Harvester here is laying off 800 Steelworkers in the next six months. And workers, particularly younger ones, are finding it harder to get a job every day.

The formation of the Hamilton Committee of the Unemployed is a promising development. It held its first meeting March 8, and its biweekly meetings have attracted up to 60 people, including both trade-union members and unemployed workers.

The committee has had some problems establishing itself. It has yet to have a real discussion on a program for fighting unemployment. And despite the participation of some prominent trade unionists, the committee has not yet organized sufficiently to get the endorsement and participation of the labor movement.

Some committee members downplay the importance of involving the trade unions, thinking that the trade-union leadership can be bypassed by taking independent, militant action that will inspire workers.

Some forces have proposed organizing a demonstration for May Day. Such an action by the Hamilton committee and others in the region, including those in Brantford and Brampton, could be an important step forward in fighting unemployment.

But it should be linked to real progress in gaining trade-union support. This is central to prevent the committee from appearing isolated, which could undermine the possibility for an effective campaign against unemployment.

British Columbia

VANCOUVER—British Columbia's unemployed are getting organized. The Greater Vancouver Union of the Unemployed (GVUU) has launched a wide-ranging program to continue the struggle for full employment following the successful March 30 "Rally for Jobs" in Victoria.

The B.C. Federation of Labor has sent out a letter to all affiliated locals in the Lower Mainland calling for their assistance to the GVUU, and response has been enthusiastic.

The GVUU program includes educationals, research, a speakers' bureau, fund-raising, counseling, and a fight against several odious unemployment insurance regulations like the "creative job search."

Calgary CUPE strike firm

By Ron Cameron

EDMONTON—Two Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) locals in Calgary are standing firm in lengthy strikes challenging the city council's stand for "wage restraints."

Local 37, the city outside workers, has been on strike since March 2 for a 12 percent wage increase. Local 709, the city foremen, on strike since March 14, are demanding a $1.00-an-hour across-the-board pay adjustment. Both locals demand a 38-hour workweek for 40 hours pay.

Calgary Mayor Ross Alger is out to break the strike. His best wage offer is 6 percent. And he is urging the Lougheed government to take away the right to strike from civic workers.

As Alger put it, "What do these people want—a new color TV set, a dishwasher, a clothes dryer?"

His crusade against such luxury living in the working class has been eagerly supported by the media, the courts, the police, and the Chamber of Commerce. They all fear that a CUPE victory in Calgary could start a chain reaction among public sector workers.

At stake is the federal-provincial governments' plan to keep public-sector wage increases below 7 percent in 1978.

The striking locals have received a good deal of support. But an aggressive solidarity campaign is needed to help win this strike.

National CUPE and the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees (now negotiating a new contract) should send staff to aid the strikes. Rallies should be organized across the province.

The Alberta Federation of Labor and the New Democratic Party should build such actions.

Motions of support should be sent from public-sector workers across the country.

A CUPE victory in Calgary would be a hard blow against wage restraints in the public sector.

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Regina—Revolutionary Workers League, 1843 Broad St., no. 16, S4P 1X8.
Saskatoon—Revolutionary Workers League, P.O. Box 7315.
Toronto—Revolutionary Workers League, Young Socialists, Louis Riel Bookstore, 334 Queen St. W., M5V 2A2, 363-9618, 364-4056.
Vancouver—Revolutionary Workers League, Young Socialists, Vanguard Books, 1208 Granville St., V6Z 1M4, 688-5924.
Winnipeg—Revolutionary Workers League, P.O. Box 2005, Red Books, 410 Alfred at Salter, 582-1580.

IN QUEBEC

Joliette—Ligue Ouvriere Revolutionnaire, 759-0935.
Montreal—Ligue Ouvriere Revolutionnaire, 226 est, rue Ste-Catherine, H2X 1L1, 861-3018. Librairie Rouge, 1737 rue St-Denis, 849-2936.
Quebec City—Ligue Ouvriere Revolutionnaire, 304 1ere rue, Limoilou, 522-4927.
Sherbrooke—Ligue Ouvriere Revolutionnaire, C.P. 1593.

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Socialist Voice

Demand full inquiry

Protest attack on Quebec socialists

By the Editors

Defenders of political rights across Canada have every reason to be concerned at the attempts to set fire to the headquarters of the Quebec Trotskyists.

As reported on this page, there were two separate attempts early this month. In the second, a neighboring building was destroyed.

The offices of *Lutte Ouvriere* were not the only targets. The same three-storey building houses the national offices of the Ligue Ouvriere Revolutionnaire (LOR), the Quebec wing of the Revolutionary Workers League, as well as the Montreal branch offices of the LOR. Apart from a tavern on the first floor, there are no other offices in the building.

The article by the editors of *Lutte Ouvriere* points to a number of suspicious circumstances surrounding the fires. In particular, there is the fact that the police failed to tell the LOR or *Lutte Ouvriere* about the first attempt to burn down their offices. It was only after the second fire that they were told.

Would the cops have shown the same lack of concern if the target had been one of the capitalist parties?

The cops claim they think only an isolated individual was responsible for these fires. How can they be so sure? The police should have every reason to suspect political motives. As recent disclosures have documented, arson has been used more than once against political critics of the status quo. There is not only the Mounties' infamous barn-burning, but the fire at Praxis offices in 1970, and less than a year ago the fire at offices of various community groups on Ontario Street in Montreal (documented by the Human Rights League in its Operation Freedom).

M.I./Lutte Ouvriere

Arson attempt failed at LOR headquarters (building with awnings) but destroyed neighboring building.

In view of revelations of police crimes of this nature, shouldn't the cops be especially concerned to clear up justifiable suspicions that some branch of the police themselves was implicated in the recent fires?

Was some intermediary involved? At a criminal trial in Toronto earlier this year, members of an extreme right-wing gang were sentenced to prison terms for a series of physical attacks they had carried out against offices and bookstores of left-wing organizations. Among the targets was the bookstore associated with the Revolutionary Workers League. Most interesting, and disturbing, was the disclosure that an RCMP agent had participated in these attacks, in some cases egging on the goons.

The arson attempts against the LOR occurred only a few days after a meeting in Montreal of the Central Committee of the LOR/RWL, and while the LOR was discussing how it would participate in the coming federal election. If the arson attempts had been successful, the destruction of the League's offices would obviously have struck a severe blow at the electoral campaign of the entire organization.

Defenders of democratic rights must see to it that all the facts in relation to these mysterious fires are fully investigated. Those responsible must be charged with the full force of the law.

Demands for a complete investigation should be sent to the Montreal police, the Quebec Surete, and the RCMP. Send copies to the LOR, at the address listed in the directory on page 11.

Double arson attempt targets 'Lutte Ouvriere'

Following is an editorial in the current issue of Lutte Ouvriere, *Quebec sister publication of* Socialist Voice.

MONTREAL—On April 7, early in the morning, an attempt was made to burn down the offices of *Lutte Ouvriere.*

We found gas-soaked newspapers, partly burned, against the front door. Fortunately the fire did not catch. The only damage was a charred door.

But at another spot outside the same building the fire did catch. It spread, sparing our offices, but raging through a three-storey building two doors down the street.

We also have learned that just three days earlier, as the tavern located underneath the *Lutte Ouvriere* offices was about to close up, a worker there discovered an attempt at arson. The police were informed, but failed to pass on the information.

Who would want to destroy our offices? *Lutte Ouvriere* has been campaigning since its first issue against the RCMP's illegal actions against the workers movement, the left, and community organizations.

Our paper supports Operation Freedom, the campaign launched by the Human Rights League (Ligue des Droits de l'Homme) against illegal RCMP harassment.

The RCMP has already admitted to the Keable commission that it set fire to the barn where activists of the Quebec Liberation Front (FLQ) were to meet Black Panthers from the U.S. in 1971. Is this a similar "dirty trick" by the RCMP?

The federal government and chauvinist anti-Quebec forces have command of hundreds of millions of dollars to use to undermine the right of Quebecois to determine their own future.

Lutte Ouvriere is one of the few voices on the socialist left raised to promote Quebec's national independence. Who would want to shut us up? The forces of repression of the federal or Quebec governments? A right-wing organization of those who defend this society of exploitation, oppression and repression? Perhaps we will never know.

But we must defend our right to exist. We ask all organizations that support free speech to denounce this attempt to destroy our headquarters. We reaffirm our determination to continue our support to the struggles of those fighting against this inhuman system. For independence and socialism; for the workers republic of Quebec.

Quebec women fight for abortion rights

A week of Quebec-wide actions for the right to abortion is under way, culminating in a mass demonstration April 22 in Quebec City.

The action has been called by the National Coordinating Committee for Free Abortion on Demand (CNALG), a coalition formed January 27-28 embracing the broadest range of forces ever to unite on this issue in Quebec.

The CNALG encompasses more than 30 groups: women's groups, neighborhood associations, women's rights committees in the trade unions and in the Parti Quebecois, and the Revolutionary Workers League (Ligue Ouvriere Revolutionnaire—LOR).

The participation of women from Quebec City, Hull, Sherbrooke, and Drummondville reflects the campaign's national scope.

The Quebec women's movement has waged a strong fight for abortion rights in the past year.

The election of the Parti Quebecois in 1976 aroused hopes that the government would act for abortion rights. But it did not. The women's movement turned to direct action. On April 2, 1977, 2,000 demonstrated for free abortion on demand. Two months later the PQ convention ovverrode the ferocious opposition of the PQ cabinet and voted to support that demand. Still, the PQ government did nothing.

Support from the unions

Influence in the trade unions has always been a strong point of the women's movement in Quebec. Each major union federation has formed a women's committee, and they have collaborated in actions such as the International Women's Day celebrations.

The union brass have tried to encompass the women's movement and limit its scope. They have been reluctant to mobilize around the issue of abortion rights.

But a decision by the December convention of the Quebec Federation of Labor (FTQ) to support free abortion on demand put all three major union federations on record in backing this demand.

The degree of active participation by the union movement will be important in determining the success of the April 22 action.

March 8: a good omen

The success of this year's International Women's Day actions in Quebec shows the possibilities for the abortion rights action.

March 8 has been a day of mobilization for militant Quebecois women for the past five years. This year it was bigger than ever, reflecting the growth and political maturity of the women's movement.

Debates, political festivals and demonstrations were held between February 20 and March 11, drawing large numbers throughout Quebec.

The largest activity, a demonstration and rally of 3,000 in Montreal, was organized by a joint women's rights committee of the three major union federations. The main demand was for paid maternity leaves.

Unfortunately, the organizing committee did not allow non-union women's groups and others to participate in planning the action, and would not allow feminist groups to speak at the rally. But while there had been numerous competing activities in previous years, this year's March 8 was unified. The various women's groups in Montreal formed a single contingent for the demonstration, and also held a day of workshops March 11 that drew more than 250 women.

In some other cities in Quebec the unions joined with other organizations in planning March 8. In Quebec City, for example, two union federations—the CSN and CEQ—joined with women's groups and some political organizations like the LOR in organizing an evening rally that drew more than 150 people.

The March 8 actions had other weaknesses. However important the question of maternity leaves may be, the unions did not raise broader aspects of women's oppression such as the right to abortion, childcare, and equal pay for equal work—issues that would have attracted a larger number of women.

But union women participated in greater numbers than previously. And among independent women's groups, the women's movement has clearly taken a leap forward in the last year.

Marvi/Lutte Ouvriere

National Coordinating Committee for Free Abortion on Demand participated in March 8 demonstration.

What road forward for abortion rights?

An ongoing discussion has been under way in the CNALG since its formation, on the objectives of the abortion rights campaign. A debate over the type of abortion facilities that women should fight for led to adoption of the demands: "For a network of services for free abortion on demand, controlled by the users and the personnel who work in them."

The campaign is seen both as a battle for the decriminalization of abortion and the provision of services without cost and on demand, and also as a challenge to capitalist, "professional" medicine.

Like the Italian sisters who fought for the establishment of "consultori," our Quebecois sisters are beginning to address the question: What is required for women to win control over their own bodies? What kind of medical services do we want? Who should control them?

—adapted from Lutte Ouvriere